AMENDMENTS TO CLAIMS:

Claims 1-47 (Canceled)

48. (New): An optical coupling for supporting at least an optical fiber in alignment with a connection device in an optoelectronic assembly, comprising:

a ferrule having a body defining at least a bore for supporting an optical fiber; and

a sleeve sized and shaped to receive the ferrule and to couple to the connection device, so as to align the ferrule and the optical fiber supported by the ferrule relative to the connection device.

49. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 48, wherein the sleeve is made of metal, and is characterized by a structure that is formed by a stamping process.

50. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 49, wherein the sleeve has a cross-section that is characterized by a loop formed by stamping from a generally flat material.

51. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 50, wherein the sleeve has a structure that includes a split along an axial direction.

52. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 49, wherein the sleeve has a cross-section that is generally uniform.

53. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 49, wherein the sleeve has an end that extends beyond the ferrule, and wherein said end couples to the connection device.

54. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 48, wherein the body of the ferrule is made of metal, and the body is characterized by a structure that is formed by a stamping process.

55. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 54, wherein the body of the ferrule has a cross-section that is generally uniform for an entire length of the body.

56. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 55, wherein the body of the ferrule has a cross-section that is generally at least one of circular, partially circular, rectangular, and loop.

57. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 48, wherein the body of the ferrule is generally cylindrical, and the sleeve has a body that is generally cylindrical.

58. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 48, wherein the body of the ferrule defines a plurality of bores for supporting a plurality of optical fibers.

59. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 48, further comprising a guide pin extending from the ferrule for alignment with the connection device.

60. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 59, wherein the ferrule comprises a bore for receiving the guide pin.

61. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 48, wherein the ferrule includes at least one of a groove and a protrusion on its external surface and the sleeve includes at least one of a complementary protrusion or groove.

62. (New): The optical coupling as in any of the foregoing claims, wherein the ferrule comprises a first ferrule half and a second ferrule half.

63. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 62, wherein the first ferrule half and the second ferrule half are maintained in a mating relationship by the sleeve.

64. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 62, wherein the first ferrule half has a structure that is substantially similar to that of the second ferrule half, each provided with at least a groove, which together define the bore for supporting the optical fiber.

65. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 62, wherein the first ferrule half and the second ferrule half each characterized by a structure that is formed by a stamping process.

66. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 65, wherein the first ferrule half and the second ferrule half are both stamped simultaneously.

67. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 65, wherein the first ferrule half and the second ferrule half are both stamped from a single work piece.

68. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 67, wherein the single work piece is in sheet form.

69. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 67, wherein the body of the ferrule is formed by stamping and attaching two ends of the single work piece representing the first ferrule half and second ferrule half.

70. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 69, wherein the two ends are attached by welding.

71. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 62, wherein the first ferrule half has a first surface and the second ferrule half has a second surface, wherein the first ferrule half and the second ferrule half are assembled together at the first and second surfaces, and wherein the first ferrule half is attached to the second ferrule half by at least one of welding and an adhesive material provided at the edge of the first and second surfaces.

72. (New): The optical coupling as in claims 71, wherein a notch is provided at the edge of each of the first and second surfaces, and wherein the first ferrule half is attached to the second ferrule half by at least one of welding and an adhesive provided at the notches.

73. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 64, wherein the first ferrule half and the second ferrule half are each provided with a plurality of matching grooves.

74. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 73, wherein the first ferrule half and the second ferrule half are connected at an edge.

75. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 74, wherein the first ferrule half and the second ferrule half have a connected body structure that is characterized by U-shaped loop formed by looping from a generally flat material in a stamping process, having two long sections joined by a short section.

76. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 75, wherein each of the long sections defines a plurality of grooves for supporting optical fibers.

77. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 48, wherein the body of the ferrule has a periphery defining at least two distinct contact surfaces, and wherein the sleeve is sized and shaped to contact the contact surfaces on said periphery, biasing contact pressure towards the contact surfaces.

78. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 77, wherein the body of the ferrule has a generally star-shaped cross-section, defining the at least two contact surfaces against the sleeve.

79. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 78, wherein the star-shaped cross-section is characterized by a loop formed by looping from a generally flat material in a stamping process.

80. (New): The optical coupling as in 79, wherein the ferrule comprises a unitary body.

81. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 77, wherein the body of the ferrule has a generally U-shaped cross-section, comprising two long sections joined by a short section, wherein the long sections each defines the at least two contact surfaces against the sleeve.

82. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 81, wherein each of the long sections define a plurality of grooves for supporting optical fibers.

83. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 77, wherein the body of the ferrule comprises two half ferrules, each having a body characterized by a loop formed by looping from a generally flat material in a stamping process, and wherein the body of at least one of the two half ferrules has a split along an axial direction, thereby defining at least two distinct contact surfaces against the sleeve.

84. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 48, wherein the ferrule comprises a strength member extending from the body of the ferrule, which supports a section of the fiber not received in the bore of the body.

85. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 48, wherein the connection device comprises a complementary ferrule having a body defining at least a bore for supporting another optical fiber.

86. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 85, wherein the complementary ferrule of the connection device has a structure that is substantially similar to that of the ferrule, such that the sleeve couples and aligns the ferrule and the complementary ferrule, and the optical fibers supported thereby.

87. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 48, further comprising a plurality of ferrules, each supporting an optical fiber, wherein the sleeve is sized and shaped to receive the plurality of ferrules.

88. (New): The optical coupling as in claim 62, wherein the first ferrule half and the second ferrule half each has a hollow body structure facing each other.

89. (New): A connector for connecting first and second optical fibers in an optoelectronic assembly, comprising:

a first ferrule supporting the first optical fiber;

a second ferrule supporting the second optical fiber;

a common sleeve sized and shaped to receive the first ferrule and the second ferrule, so as to align the first ferrule relative to the second ferrule, and the first optical fiber relative to the second optical fiber.

90. (New): The connector as in claim 89, wherein at least one of the first and second ferrules comprises first and second half ferrules that together define a bore sized and shaped to receive respective one of the first and second optical fibers.

91. (New). The connector as in claim 89, wherein the common sleeve has a first end receiving the first ferrule, an a second end receiving the second ferrule.

92. (New): A connector for coupling two optical fibers in an optoelectronic assembly, comprising:

a first component configured to support a first optical fiber, comprising a first body defining a first bore for supporting the first optical fiber, wherein the first body is characterized by a first structure that is shaped by a stamping process;

a second component configured to support a second optical fiber, comprising a second body defining a second bore for supporting the second optical fiber, wherein the second body is characterized by a second structure that is shaped by a stamping process; and

a third component configured to axially align the first component and the second component, so that the first optical fiber is aligned with the second optical fiber, wherein the third component is characterized by a third structure that is shaped by a stamping process.

93. (New): A process for producing an optical coupling for supporting at least one optical fiber in alignment with a connection device in an optoelectronic assembly, comprising the steps of:

stamping a metal body to form a ferrule defining at least a bore for supporting an optical fiber; and

forming a sleeve sized and shaped to receive the ferrule and to couple to the connection device, to align the ferrule and the optical fiber that is supported by the ferrule relative to the connection device.

94. (New) The process of claim 81, wherein the sleeve is made of metal, and wherein the forming step comprises the step of stamping a metal body to form the sleeve.